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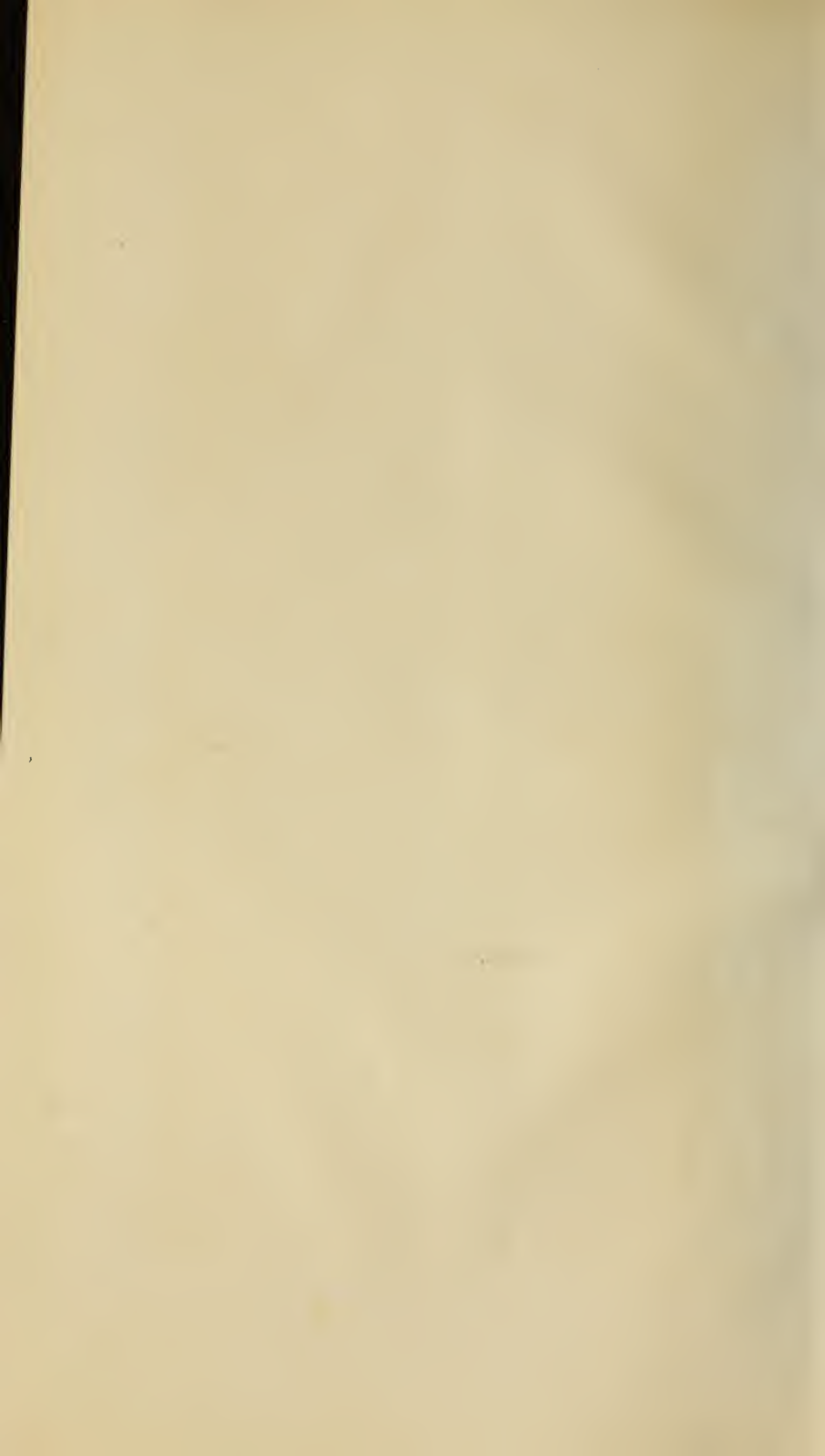


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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



THE CHRISTIAN PREACHER:

A SERMON

DELIVERED IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, TUSKALOOSA, ALA.,

AT THE

ORDINATION OF THE PASTOR ELECT,—

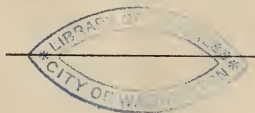
THE REV. JOSHUA H. FOSTER,—

ON SUNDAY, MARCH 13TH, 1853;

BY THE

REV. THOMAS F. CURTIS.

(PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE CHURCH.)



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THE CHRISTIAN PREACHER.

2 TIMOTHY: I, 10-11.

* * OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST * HATH ABOLISHED DEATH, AND HATH BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL, WHEREUNTO I AM APPOINTED A PREACHER.

Thus vividly, thus energetically does the Apostle Paul describe THE WORK AND OFFICE OF THE CHRISTIAN PREACHER: let this be the subject of our present discourse.

There are, my brethren, in the original language of the New Testament, three terms, all of which are very commonly translated in our authorized English version, by the verb "to preach."

Without going into any critical niceties in regard to them, enough of their meaning may be easily extracted from the connections in which they occur, to shew us much of the *divinely inspired idea* of the office of the Christian preacher.

I. The first of the terms to which I would invite your attention (*euangelizo—omai*) signifies literally "*to bring good news.*" It is the word which was used by the angel Gabriel when, addressing Zacharias in the temple, he foretold the birth of John, and declared that he was sent to him "*to shew these glad tidings.*" (Luke 1.19.) This is the very term again used by the angel, who, in company with the heavenly host, surrounded by the glory of the Lord, announced to the shepherds of Bethlehem, the birth of our Saviour. It is rendered in our Bibles, "*I bring you good tidings.*"

“Fear not, for behold, *I bring you good tidings* of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” From this term, our English word evangelize is formed.

Here, then, is the first idea given to us by the Holy Spirit of the work of the Christian preacher. He is to be the angel, (for our English word angel is made out of one of the components of this term) or messenger of good news.

The word is however calculated, not so much to fix attention on him as the messenger, as on the nature of his message, the gospel—the good news of salvation through Christ.

Not every species of glad tidings, is it the duty of the minister to occupy himself in delivering. As a *Christian* preacher it belongs to him to dwell only on that good news which grows out of the work of Christ.

And while Christianity effects good incidentally to the temporal concerns of man, all this does not primarily form the burden of the gospel message. It is Christianity that has raised woman to her present position of influence, intelligence and refinement. It is Christianity that is the life and soul of all free governments,—Christianity that has formed the happy institutions of this happiest of lands,—Christianity that has thus far preserved, and alone can perpetuate them. These truths it may be well for the gospel minister to bear in mind, and to declare on proper occasions. But all these things, I apprehend, are not “*THE good tidings,*”—the gospel which he is sent specifically to announce.

The greatest value of these temporal blessings to the

Christian is the assurance they afford, that he has not followed cunningly devised fables, in confiding his eternal interests to Christ.

The good news that it is the office of the Christian preacher to declare, is that which is so vividly announced in the text; the immortal interests of man, secured and illumined by Christ. “Our Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, whereunto I am appointed a preacher.”

I cannot think, as most appear to do, that the terms “death” and “life” here refer exclusively to the death and life of the body. It is indeed most strictly true, even now, that Christ hath to the believer, abolished—rendered void—the sceptre of the “king of terrors”—abolished death, so far as the soul is concerned, by certifying to all men, an immortal existence beyond, and illumining through its dark portals, what never was thus visible before,—the world to come, in all its gorgeousness and splendour.

And he hath abolished death, so far as the body of the believer is concerned, by compressing its duration, and transforming it into a sleep. O yes, and a mighty and glorious truth it is, that when he who was himself the prince of life, descended into the dark chambers of death, he descended only that he might plant the germs of a new existence in every human grave, and then he arose, the first fruit and the pledge of a glorious resurrection for all united to him. Christ hath nullified and abolished death, by substituting for it a sleep. So short, so sweet, so silent, so refreshing shall be the sojourn of the tomb, so shortly shall this pale lifeless form wake up again, reanimated and revived,

death shall be so sweetly changed back again to life, and the forms of loved ones, sleeping quietly now in the dust of the earth, arise, all beautified and glorified, that it may be most literally announced as a part of the glad message to be brought home by the minister to the hearts of his hearers, that "Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light."

But we must be allowed to understand something more full, I think, as included in the terms "death" and "life" in the text. Death, I take to be here the symbol and personification of the whole finished work of sin. (Jas. 1.15.) When Christ announced himself as "the resurrection and the life, in whom whosoever believes shall never see or taste of death," but is already passed from it unto life, the terms in question are certainly used in a much broader sense than their mere literal meaning. The death includes the whole work of sin upon the soul as well as the body, and the life, that process of renewal commenced in regeneration, and carried on more and more fully towards that glorious consummation, when "the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead, dwelling in us, shall quicken also our mortal bodies."

Here, then, I say is THE good news, in all its fullness and vividness,—the work of sin rendered void, and the immortal interests of the whole man, soul and body, centred in, and secured and illumined by Christ. Regeneration by the Spirit of Christ, redemption by the blood of Christ, resurrection by a union with Christ,—these form the staple of the preacher's message; a religion commenced in time, but whose chief motives and hopes are drawn from eternity.

Christianity is emphatically the religion of a future

life, and might, in one sentence, be defined as "Good news from the eternal world." It counteracts the allurements of the present state, by bringing vividly a brighter world before our eyes, and the preacher's success will largely depend upon his bearing this in mind. To no other system, not even the Mosaic, hath God ever "put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." (Heb. 2.5.) The true Christian preacher must rest all his own motives and plans upon this one basis—*eternity*; on this all his appeals to the conscience; on this all the hopes and happiness which he promises to the sin-stricken and sorrowing.

He is not to stand up in the pulpit, then, to unfold a mere political religion for this life, the great end of which is to make men happy by reforming civil governments and temporalities. Christianity has done more for the temporal happiness of man, more for the prosperity of this nation, than all philosophy, or the experience of the world beside; but it is because that holy system has turned the eye of man away from his temporal or political relations primarily, that it has accomplished all this. Christ's kingdom is not of this world.

Nor is the good news of the Christian preacher, any of those new philosophical systems, physical, intellectual or moral, that occupy so many in these days. Some there are, who seem to think bodily health, and good phrenological developements, the great secret of all happiness and virtue; others have a new system of psychology or biology, which they set up, and by spiritual rappings, or Swedenborgian visions, or the transcendental "reason", hope to renovate the world. The religion of yet another class is made up of some principles of moral philosophy, founded on what they con-

sider certain natural relations. Their creed consists of no war, no capital punishments; or of fraternity, equality and socialism. And these all, at times claim more or less affinity with the Christian religion. But while such human and ephemeral gospels rise and burst like bubbles on the wave, the glad tidings of the Christian minister are drawn from those eternal springs which are so much deeper and purer in their influence. The true preacher therefore needs not aids such as these, which are "of the earth, earthy," many of them sensual and devilish also. The good news of Christianity derives its chief potency from its connection with another world, and not with this. It teaches each man living in time, to act on an eternal scale. Archimedes said he could move the earth, could he only rest his lever on a few inches of another world more substantial. Christianity, resting its fulcrum on the eternal world, easily moves the whole framework and institutions of the present.

It is also the peculiar prerogative of the Christian minister to fix the faith and affections of his people, not on a philosophic system, but on a *personal Saviour*. He has to preach, not so much a mere series of doctrines, however true, as Christ "the truth."

Lord Byron used to say to a friend, that he thought himself at least half a Christian, because he believed that there "is no contradiction in Scripture that cannot be reconciled by an attentive consideration and comparison of passages," and received as truth several of its chief doctrines.* So far from this proving him half a Christian, it only shewed that he had not yet perceived

* See Kennedy's *Conversations on Religion with Lord Byron*, pp. 87, 97, 111, 119, 127.

the chief requirement of the gospel, i. e., faith in Christ as a person, and not merely even in Christianity as a series of doctrines. No man can understandingly assert that he believes "*all* the articles of the Christian faith," because, though he should believe all that he may know, or have heard, there may be yet other points, even in the Bible, to which his attention has never been called,—points on which, therefore, he has not any belief at all. But the same man may have such faith in Christ, as to be willing to believe all that he declares, because he is the "teacher come from God." He may thus believe, not on the ground of reason, but of authority; not from seeing its fitness in itself, but from faith in a Being infinitely wise. The Ethiopian eunuch, to whom Philip preached Christ, may not have heard half so much of Christian doctrine as Lord Byron believed in when he wrote to his friend; but he believed in Christ with all his heart, and his faith grasping the centre, might therefore safely be trusted in due time to radiate outwards to the circumference. Hence he was a Christian.

A few philosophers, here and there, like Coleridge,* may see, or think they see, that reasonableness in each Christian doctrine, that they can embrace it on its own account; but alas for the mass of mankind, if obliged to wait for this, before becoming Christians. Indeed, while many a man has thus seen the excellence of each part of the system, after he has tried it, I doubt if any one in Christendom ever became a believer in this way.

* It may be proper to remark, that few, if any, ever made a personal faith in Christ more completely the centre and basis of all right faith in Christianity, than this great man.

The duty of the preacher of the gospel, then, is not primarily to reason out a system of Christian theology, but to preach Christ; to fix the allegiance of the world on him as the king and captain of our salvation, to centre the discipleship of mankind in him, as the teacher come from God. This is equally opposed to the vague philosophical impersonalities of German scepticism on the one hand, and papal deification of saints and virgins on the other.

We have seen that this word preach has in it essentially the idea of bearing "*good*" tidings. It follows, therefore, in accordance with the text, that its prevailing motive is eternal life offered through Christ, rather than death threatened.

But further,—and here lies the main difficulty of truly preaching the gospel,—the term before us intimates that what is said must be "*news*" to the hearers. The superficial will say that this is impossible:—that what has just been described as the gospel is the same system that has been preached these two thousand years or near it:—that it might have been novel to those who first heard it, but to us, brought up under its sound from childhood, it must have parted with all claims to the character of news.

I would illustrate the fallacy of this notion thus: Is there any absurdity in speaking of drawing fresh water out of an ancient spring? Did not Jesus speak of living water, as he sat on Jacob's well? Though the principles of the gospel are eternal and unchangeable, the forms and combinations of those principles vary in every age, and in the individual experience of each Christian, and with every new dispensation of Providence. What would you think of a correspondent

who should tell you that it was impossible to write any news, because his only alphabet was the same a b c you had learned in childhood, and as old as the English language? Are not the new and endless combinations of that dear old alphabet capable of throwing out the most profound experiences, and original reflections of the deepest thinker? Now thus it is with the gospel, the dear old fashioned alphabet of Christianity. It is most dear *because* it unites the memories of our spiritual childhood, with our most mature experiences of grace in perpetual freshness. The waters drawn from the old wells of salvation will be more fresh and pure than those taken from the swollen turbid streams of some changing and shallow philosophy.

In the experience or the exhortation of some earnest young Christian, who has not perceived a freshness in the gospel arising out of some of its most eternal elements brought in contact with a new heart? The season of spring is as old as creation, yet does it not produce new flowers every year?

In fact, the application of eternal principles to new circumstances, produces all the newest wonders of the age in which we live. The expansive power of steam is daily producing great marvels in one direction, that of heated air in another, currents of electricity in others. Yet these principles have all been at work since creation, and observed in some of their manifestations, and now are only being applied a little differently from what they have been. Just so the power of Christ's constraining love expands the heart, expels its old and feculent passions, and fires it with a thousand new impulses. These work in unexpected combinations with the various circumstances in which men are placed,

and of the age in which we live. But it is the same gospel which now produces Missions, and Bible Societies and Sabbath Schools, that formerly led Augustine to write his Confessions, or Luther to battle with Rome, or St. Paul to reason in synagogues and to write his Epistles.

Not many years since, an old sea captain was converted from a life of great profligacy, and came before the church. A deacon whose fortune consisted in some valuable mills and water privileges, asked him whether he did not fear that his old habits would soon impede his new love for religion. "Sir," said the penitent, "what do you expect to keep the great wheel of your saw-mills always moving?" "The stream of water which runs through them." "And why do you suppose that wheel will continue to be turned by the water?" Because it has been sufficient to move it once, and keep it going ever since." "Then, sir, know, that there is a stream of living water—God's free grace—running through my heart;—that heart would never have beat with love to him once, had not he loved me first; and now, not until the fountains of eternal love are dried up, can my soul cease to turn again with love to him." Here was a new illustration of the old gospel.

Now this is the kind of news that the Christian minister has to proclaim,—not another gospel, but a gospel always new. Those very truths will be news to men at the proper time, when their circumstances require them, which, if presented out of season, will appear as idle tales, utterly stale. Just so, bread will taste sweet and fresh to the hungry man, though made in the same way for thirty years, if there be only the

appetite to eat. "A word spoken in season, how good is it!" "The full soul loatheth the honey-comb, but to the hungry soul, every bitter thing is sweet."

But the great secret of perpetual newness in preaching, is for us to prepare our sermons and to deliver them with a heart fresh from communion with God. One great cause why preaching so soon loses its effect, why preachers so soon wear out, is that we have such a dead, dry way of preaching living truth.* We lean upon our logic too much, on the demonstration of the Spirit too little. The true secret of preaching quickening sermons, is to live near the truths we preach. It is a dangerous sign, when all the most evangelical and melting parts of a sermon have to be dug up from the memory of the past alone, cooked up out of the rotten manna of by-gone experiences. Fresh figures,

* A few years ago I received the following remarks, in a private letter from a highly venerated friend, of many years experience in the Christian life. The letter was in reference partly to the training of some young brethren preparing for the Christian ministry, then receiving instruction from me. "Oh that I could hear some preaching that would do my soul good!—the greater part of what I hear, instead of good, actually does me injury. I return disappointed with myself, the preacher, and even the people. Instead of intelligence, power, truth, and love; exciting, animating, stimulating, I have words, words, words. I have heard in my time, some of the greatest preachers of the day, particularly Irving, before he went mad, and Robert Hall, before he grew cold, and—in his best days; but now in my old age, while not yet a completely burnt out volcano, I find no comfort, strength or encouragement in public exercises. I go because it is my duty, and my example is of consequence, but return the worse. Oh that our young Christian brethren now preparing for the ministry might be led to see the fatal consequences of unanimating, uninspiring, sleepy sermons. Let them preach, I had almost said, anything but *death*. I do deliberately believe that there is a far deeper desire on the part of the people to hear an intelligent, powerful gospel ministry, than there is to preach such a gospel. Let any man of real talent, with even a moderate education, come forth boldly, independently, with the fear of God before him, and the love of Christ in his heart, and the people will hear him gladly."

drawn from living providences, and a glowing heart, are what we need.

I saw, not long since, notice of a lecture on "the culture of the imagination in moral and religious, as well as intellectual education." I have no doubt, from the distinguished Christian character of the speaker, that the lecture was full of excellent truths. But after all, my brethren, what is the proper way to cultivate the imagination for our pulpit exercises? I answer, *by deep, clear religious earnestness*. All gaudy tricks of rhetoric disgust well regulated minds everywhere, and most of all, in the pulpit. But men always think in symbols, when they think deeply, and therefore they always express their feelings in strong, condensed, striking figures, when they give free and unaffected utterance to a full soul. Now it is this kind of freshness of figure and feeling, resulting from new views and experiences of divine grace, and a deeper and more original earnestness, that gives to our discourses the most proper imagery. This will make them always "news."

Such, my brethren, is preaching,—evangelizing, bearing the good news. It matters not in what way, whether in personal conversation, as when Gabriel unfolded the glad tidings to Zacharias alone in the temple; or publicly, as when, in company with the multitude of the heavenly host, an angel announced the birth of Christ to the listening shepherds. Philip "preached" to the eunuch in his chariot: (Acts 8.35) —thus those disciples scattered abroad on the death of Stephen, went everywhere "preaching" the word,—evangelizing (Acts 8.12). This is the kind of preaching, if I may so say, which the minister has in common

with all other Christians. It belongs to the universal priesthood of God's elect. It may be carried on in the prayer meeting, the sabbath school, or the private conversation, and it must be the foundation of all other preaching, more exclusively ministerial.

II. But I have detained you too long on this, the first and chief part of my subject. There is a second word (*kerusso*) used more entirely in an official sense, and also commonly translated "to preach." It signifies literally, and most exactly "to proclaim," "to publish." It was in this sense that Noah was "*a preacher of righteousness*" (2 Pet. 2.5), and that Jonah "preached" unto the Ninevites:—neither of them evangelized,—they had no good news to tell, but both, by divine commission, proclaimed the messages of Jehovah. This is the word used when it is said that in those days came John the Baptist in the wilderness of Judea, "preaching," or proclaiming as the herald of the Messiah, the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Mat. 3.1-2). Indeed, the term we are now considering is formed out of a word which signifies a *herald*, or sometimes an ambassador, the word, in fact, which is used in the text "whereunto I am appointed "*a preacher*," or, as McKnight here translates it, "*a herald*." It was used anciently in reference to those who proclaimed the laws. The messages might be either read or spoken, so that they were proclaimed officially and publicly. Thus Moses is spoken of as "preached" unto the Jews, "being *read* in the synagogue every sabbath day (Acts 15.21), that is, his laws and writing were publicly recited.

There are two chief ideas of preaching contained in this word, which the other did not afford;—*shortness*

and *publicity*. It tells us that our preaching must contain that element of curtness and crispness, which stands opposed to all drawling or apologies, or explanations, or fears of being misconceived—opposed to all that pretty word-picking strain of polished sentences and rounded periods, that never prick a sinner's conscience.

See how the herald flings out his words upon the world, and relies on the power that sent him to vindicate his message. So, as the herald of the cross, must the preacher announce God's truth, and leave results with him. He must beware even of long winded arguments and explanations, when he should appeal directly to the authority of God and his word. Half hour arguments are lost upon a congregation, and worse than lost. They often make sinners bold in reasoning against God. The gospel is its own best witness. We must proclaim it more, and argue about it less. "*Without controversy*, great is the mystery of godliness." The minister is to testify in the name of his master those things he knows to be the gospel; and, if he speak truth, God will carry it home to many a heart.

As the herald of the cross, the preacher is also to seek to give his message *publicity*. Now this duty will be rendered difficult by the inertness of the idle man, the reserve of the proud man, and the timidity even of the modest and benevolent man. The Christian minister will have to harden his face like a flint. I mean not that he should put on a bold swagger or self-confident bearing, to cover conscious inferiority, as some do. No;—but he must remember that it hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, of pro-

claiming his truth authoritatively, loudly, boldly and without apologies, to save souls.

In our studies, when before God, seeking to obtain truth, we must be slow, and humble, and cautious in receiving. But in standing up before men to communicate it, we must proclaim it boldly, openly, and to all whom we can reach, without caring who mistakes or who maligns our purposes. "Go ye into all the world and preach (proclaim) the gospel." Oh how narrow our world is as ministers. We go round in our little circle of duties, among some few who come to us to be preached to, but what are we doing for that world which is the world, which never comes to meet us? We retire to our studies, and shrink from all publicity, timidly and doubtfully advance a few points on the sabbath, and then retire again. We even fear to alarm the consciences of our hearers, fear to startle, fear to appeal, fear to awaken;—if we do so by accident, then like snails do we draw our horns and ourselves into our professional shells.

There is a singular fact connected with the history of the word here used for preacher (*kerux*). It also sometimes means a snail, or a peculiar kind of shell-fish. This came about thus. At first it meant, as I have said, a herald or ambassador preceded by trumpets; hence it came to be used for a peculiar kind of spiral shell employed as a trumpet; then for the fish inhabiting this shell, and finally for a snail, on account of the spiral shape of its shell.

The same gradual alteration often goes on in things as in words, till both are strange deviations from their original designs. A preacher ought to be a bold proclaimer of the cross, a herald going forth with confi-

dence in his message, and his master everywhere. He must aim to be all this. But instead, partly through timidity and cowardice, partly through pride, through coldness, through idleness, we hardly any of us let ourselves out into the great work of preaching Christ, but draw in our sympathies, and shrink from touching or being touched; we crawl around a circle of ideas and duties no larger than a cabbage leaf,—snails in the shells of preachers.

III. There is yet another word (*kataggello*) commonly translated to preach. It means also “*to announce*,” “*to tell*.” But there is a peculiar force about its signification radically. It has in it the idea of bearing a message *downwards*, and intimates here, that the gospel must be *brought down* to the comprehension, *down upon* the conscience,—*home* to the heart. The preacher is to bring down the truths of the gospel, intellectually, to the comprehension of his hearers. As a student, he may not soar in high-wrought sentiments or speculations or language. He must keep his foot on solid ground, on the rock of ages, and not indulge lofty flights and cloudy vaporings. His duty is to make the way of life clear. Ministers are guide-boards to the city of refuge. Their duty is to point the way of eternal life, and make it so clear that he who runs may read. Each sermon must bring down truth, not only so that people may understand it if they will, but agreeably to the ancient rule, that they must understand it, even if unwilling.

But more:—the preacher should not only bring truth *to* the understanding, but down *upon* the conscience. We have to deal with God’s wrath; to shew the sinner the enormity of his sins. When, my bro-

ther, you meet with the thoughtless, careless reprobate, living as if he had no soul, no immortal interests at stake, as if there were no eternity, no heaven, no hell, no such thing as “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,”—then know that that man is sleeping in a house that is on fire. He must be awakened, or perish; and you, if true to your office, must not only *tell* him of his danger, but bring these truths *down* upon his conscience, with all the directness, force, and solemn weight that naturally belongs to them. No fear of producing personal distaste to yourself must induce you to soften the message or deaden the blow.

And when you meet with some old professor of religion, backsliding in heart, falling into habits of idleness or pride, or gluttony or inebriety, then must you tell that man that if he live after the flesh, he shall die, and not only tell him, but bring home to him the conviction as plainly as Nathan said to David “Thou art the man;” point out to him the wrath of heaven revealed against all such things, and bring it down upon him in a vivid consciousness.

But when the sinner says, with trembling and with weeping, “I have sinned, and done that which is wrong, and it profiteth me not,”—then let your heart melt with tenderness and sympathy; tell him of the free, forgiving love of God; tell him of the Saviour who has died for him; tell him that message of God at once which says, “Let him go; I have found a ransom,”—and bring it home to his heart.

When the poor and needy seek water, and their tongue faileth them for thirst; when the souls of the pilgrims are faint, and their steps totter,—lead them to the springs and fountains of eternal love, put the cool

waters of life to their parched lips, in a word, unfold to them some message of everlasting life, and bring it home to them. When the sick and sorrowing seek your counsels, and your prayers, beware of a mere professional spirit, content not yourself with a formal statement of the consolations of the gospel. But weep with those who weep, and take their cases in secret prayer to God, until you are enabled to bring down from the skies, some fresh views of heavenly truth. Take then of the consolation wherewith you yourself are comforted, and bring it home to them.

I will only add here, that these truths must all be *brought* down to them from above by the minister as their good angel, and not flung down to them with the least superciliousness, or assumption of superiority. When Moses was coming down from the mount, with the two tables of the law, indignant at the defection of the people, he hurled down the messages of God in despair, and brake them. Not thus may the Christian preacher! He must *bring* down his truths meekly to the hearts of the people, coming himself and sitting with them, and imbibing there from the same fountains of eternal love.

What an illustration of all this have we in the preaching of Peter. Now in boldness, he brings down the wrath of God upon their consciences; "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired that a murderer should be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life." But then how meekly does he also come down and place himself on a level with these "betrayers and murderers" of his master. As Bunyan well says, "Like a heavenly decoy bird, he puts himself also among them, to draw them the better under

the net of the gospel, saying, "There is no other name given under heaven whereby *we* must be saved."* And thus he sits and sings, to allure them to salvation.

But if the minister has thus to bring truth down to the congregation, he must himself first of all go up to receive it,—up into the mount of communion with God. He has to go where Moses went, amid the thunders and lightnings and thick darkness, when he ascended Sinai to obtain the law, and into the clefts of that rock where God caused the manifestation of His goodness and His glory to pass before him. He has to go up into the mountain where Jesus went and spent whole nights in prayer. Communion with God must be his animating principle. And if, occasionally, the mount of prayer become the mount of transfiguration, as it will, if at times his soul glows with rapture, as he rises to a higher day, if in communing with his Saviour, he feel himself elevated to a purer atmosphere than that of earth, and ready to exclaim, "Lord, it is good to be here; let us build three tabernacles:"—even then must he bear in mind, that these things are only intended to fit him for greater labors and temptations in the world below. Peter found it so. It was good to be there. But it was not good, not right, not permitted that he should build or abide there. No, they must all come down from that mount, and meet the busy, bustling world, and wrestle with demoniacs, and face trials. Here on earth, nothing is to be abiding but duty. The minister must even guard against indulging a dreamy spiritualism, an impractical unworking life of lofty frames. He may not love a life of sol-

* Jerusalem Sinner Saved, Bunyan's Works, p. 235, vol. 1.

itude and study, even sacred study, too well or too long, he may not build his tabernacles even in the mount. And each time he goes up, he must ask himself what he can bring down, and whether all his retirement and studies there, impart to him a greater strength to meet the rude rough contact with the world, and bring the gospel home to the wants of the afflicted, sinful souls around him. Not on earth is there to be erected a tabernacle for him, even in the mount. Here he must labor, that he may enter into rest at last. And many a pilgrim will pass over before him, and climb the hills of the heavenly Jerusalem by paths that he points out, but cannot yet approach.

But when his work is done, he shall enter into rest, and the angel's voice proclaim to him, Come up hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the lamb's wife. Then shall his feet tread the paths he has pointed out to those who climbed before. Then shall he ascend to come down no more, and enter not into tabernacles merely, but into the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

O when, thou city of our God,
 Shall we thy courts ascend,
 Where congregations ne'er break up,
And sabbaths have no end.

I have thus endeavored to depict the office of the Christian preacher, by simply considering it in the words in which the Holy Ghost speaking, has described it for our edification.* And what a thought is that,

* There are two or three other terms, which, though usually translated in our English version in some other manner, are occasionally rendered by our verb to preach. On two of these, the author had intended to add a few words, but it could not well be done in a sermon, and time and space forbade. For a very able critical discussion of the terms already alluded to, see Campbell's Four Gospels, Prelim.' Dis., 6, pt. 5.

brought before us in the words of the text, that by Christ's appointment, a distinct order of men in the Christian Church are set apart to such a work and office as this! There is not another employment on earth, to which God has attached a tithe of the responsibility. Well may St. Paul inquire; well may each one of us exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" To this, all earth, and all heaven can furnish but one reply, "Our sufficiency is of God."

Let us learn, then, first of all, *the duty of praying more for the ministry*. To you, to whom God sends this day a preacher and a pastor, one whom we have all known and esteemed and loved for so many years as a Christian, one who hesitatingly but solemnly, at your request, is about to give himself up to be your earthly shepherd; surely, my dear brethren, it is not too much that he enter on this work, relying chiefly on your earnest daily prayer for him and his. His usefulness to you will depend largely upon this.

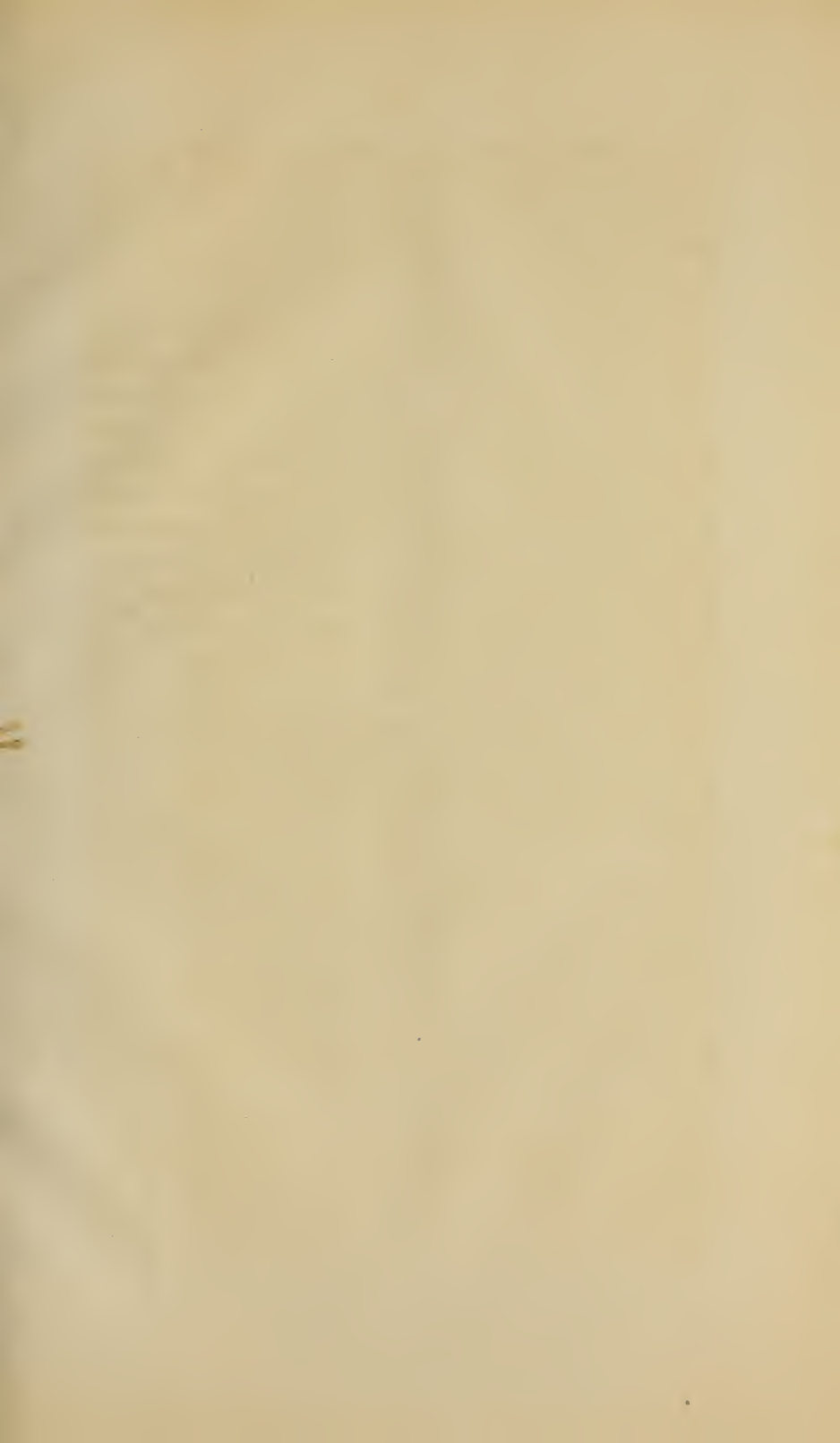
And further; sustain him also by your active, united, and co-operative support. I do not refer to pecuniary support, because, it is not necessary. I well know that to the measure of your ability, yea and beyond, you ever have done and will do that. But second his exertions by spiritual, holy and united efforts to increase his usefulness. Comfort his heart in every way. It is easy to wound a minister's feelings, nor will anything animate him more than your co-operation.

And then, extend your prayers and efforts for the enlarged usefulness of the Christian ministry generally. While now you rejoice in the favors of God, blessed as you are with a pastor, of whom such hopes of useful-

ness are justly entertained, consider the many destitute churches, and places not so blessed, and pray the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers; yea, encourage the young to look and press forward to this great work.

There never was a time when there was half the work before an educated ministry in our denomination that there is now.

And you too, my dear young friends, now growing up into life, thoughtful, serious, respectful in your attention to religion, but undetermined or unavowed as to your personal interest in Jesus, will not you, too, retire and pray that the ministrations of your new pastor may be blessed to your own souls. That will be the greatest of all encouragements he can receive. If he shall be the means of guiding you to Christ and his church, it is all he asks. Thus, in the morning of the resurrection, pastor and people shall be again united, and rise together triumphant to meet the Lord in the air. Thus shall he enter into joy, "bringing his sheaves with him."



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